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**THE TAO OF WAR:
BALANCE IN THE NATIONAL MILITARY STRATEGY**

BY

**COLONEL WILLEM BEK
International Fellow Netherlands**

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by
Colonel Willem Bek

Colonel Paul Peyton
Project Advisor

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U.S. Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Willem Bek (COL), NL

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Esoteric wisdom is not restricted to tradition and religion. Modern subnuclear physics, organizational systems theories and even teachings in “critical thinking” lead to the same truth: cooperation forms the very foundation of life. This document illustrates how individuals and nations can be guided by esoteric wisdom. The depicted trends for the future support the expressed idealistic views. The reality of perpetually conflicting interests between people and nations is not denied, however. Idealism and realism should be balanced, although the current military documents emphasize warfighting.

The concept of Preventive Defense should be more explicitly expressed in the U.S. National Military Strategy, the military doctrine and the Joint Vision 2010. The armed forces need to be able to fight the nation’s wars, if necessary and preferably in coalition with other nations. However, the structure, concepts, leadership and training of the forces should show the flexibility to accept a more diplomatic role of the military, that can prevent the need for use of other military power. To preserve the peace, one should not only prepare for war, but foremost invest in alliances and mutual understanding.

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Introduction

Purpose of this paper

The purpose of this paper is to influence the behavior of those who will be implementing or rewriting the National Military Strategy. It offers the reader a different perspective on reality, and a broader scope on nature and the never ending conflicts between opposites.

Questions at issue

In what way can mankind contribute to a larger period of peace? How can we prevent war? What ancient “lessons learned” or “esoteric wisdom” can we use in our behavior to live in peace with our surrounding world, as a person and as a nation? Does the current National Military Strategy reflect this wisdom? How can the NMS be perfected, at least in terms of the way it will be implemented or executed?

Main point of view

This document focuses initially on a contemporary European point of view: Not once since the end of the Second World War has Europe sought to impose its ideas on the rest of the world, other than by setting an example of how to solve problems by negotiation¹. Notwithstanding this focus, derived from many sources of wisdom, it is well understood that the current security environment in the world does not allow isolationism or a total reliance on non-violent strategies. It is the balance between opposites, the middle way, that always promises the best results on a continuous basis.

Organization

This paper starts with an introduction of “esoteric wisdom”, also referred to as “absolute knowledge” or “universal laws”, with some emphasis on Taoism. A variety of sources is used to convince the reader of the universality of the principles. More interesting details in this respect are incorporated in the endnotes. After depicting some of the universal laws on the personal level, esoteric wisdom will be correlated with the national level and the National Military Strategy. Different points of view will be articulated and expected developments or trends will be taken into account. Implications and consequences of the reasoning in this SRP will be delineated. The conclusions contain suggestions for a balanced implementation of the National Military Strategy.

Esoteric Wisdom

The message

The essential message in all religions and many scientific and philosophical theories is to accept and respect nature's laws (the cycle of life and evolution). This is wise advice, since there is no way to escape from these laws. Some call it God, others Buddha, Mohammed, Shiva, the Infinite, or just Nature. Most people do not recognize this message, which will be elucidated and illustrated in this paper. They are merely consumers, who know little and care less. Some people touched the truth briefly somewhere in their lives, but very few *live* the message. Esoteric wisdom is literally understood only by a chosen few.

To live according to nature's laws has nothing to do with returning to our primitive way of life of many thousands of years ago, although we have probably lost some valuable skills and spiritual knowledge in the interim. It means accepting the cyclical movements in nature, and seeing the unity of opposites. Accepting the cyclical movements between opposites, and knowing the vibrations on each level of existence, are powerful tools to influence future developments and improve the quality of life for everyone. Practical examples on a personal and national level will be used to explain this, after reviewing some of the sources that recognize this message from different branches of knowledge.

Sources

tradition and religion

Esoteric wisdom is handed over from one generation to the next in many ways, and is perhaps too obvious to attract much attention. It is the basis of all religions and can be found in many books, like the Bible, Koran, Upanishads, Buddhist scriptures and Tao Te Ching. Looking at the world today, however, it seems almost impossible to communicate this universal knowledge in words. Still, the message is repeated over and over again, in the United States for instance by Chief Seattle:

This we know. The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.²

Likewise, Dr. Martin Luther King said in an affirmation of oneness:

Injustice everywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.³

Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching is one of China's best loved books of wisdom, in which all things are seen as interdependent and part of the cosmic whole. The book was originally addressed to the sage and to the wise political ruler of the fifth century B.C. *Tao Te Ching* means the Book (*Ching*) of How (*Tao*) things happen or work (*Te*). *Tao* means the way, the process of the Universe and Nature, the right way of life. *Tao* is the cosmic process in which all things are involved. All developments in nature, those in the physical world as well as those in human situations, show cyclic patterns of coming and

going, of expansion and contraction. The basic oneness of the Universe also becomes apparent in modern physics at the subatomic level.

modern physics

Einstein's special theory of relativity involved drastic changes in the perception of space and time.⁴ It turned out that space is not three-dimensional and time is not a separate entity. Both are intimately connected and form a four-dimensional continuity: "space-time". We cannot talk about space without talking about time, and vice versa. All measurements in space and time lose their absolute significance. Scientists realize that mass is nothing but a form of energy. Even an object at rest has energy stored in its mass: $E=MC^2$, in which C is the speed of light.

The "reality" in space and in the infinitely small area of atoms goes beyond our comprehension. Atoms (one hundred millionth of a centimeter) are not the solid objects everybody always thought, but turned out to consist of large empty spaces in which electrons are running around.⁵ Classical (Newtonian) physics is still useful in day to day life, in our zone of middle dimensions. Newton's leading concepts of empty space and of solid material bodies are deeply engraved in our habits of thought. We cannot imagine a physical reality where they do not apply. Nevertheless, we should be aware that "our reality" is only real in our mind and our zone of middle dimensions.

We have to abandon more and more the images and concepts of our language when we enter the world of atoms. What we still call "mass" appears to be a continuous vibrating of tiny elements, a nuclear dance. Knowledge is no longer derived from direct

sensory experience. In studying the sub-atomic level, scientists have a non sensory experience of reality equal to that of eastern mystics.⁶

Even the subatomic units of matter are not the solid building stones we would expect. They are very abstract entities, which have a dual aspect. Depending on how we look at them, they appear sometimes as particles, sometimes as waves. It seems impossible to accept that something can be both a particle (an element contained to a very small volume) and a wave (an element spread out over a large region of space). These discoveries led to the quantum-theory, in which packets of energy were called quanta.

At the subatomic level matter does not exist with certainty at definite places, but rather shows tendencies to exist. All the laws of atomic physics are expressed in terms of probabilities to find a certain particle at a particular point in space and at a particular time. We can never predict an atomic event with certainty. At this subatomic level, each particle has no meaning on its own. It is connected with the other parts of the whole, including the (human) observer. It shows that we cannot decompose the world into its independently existing smallest units. As we penetrate into matter, Nature does not show us any basic isolated building blocks, but rather appears as a complicated web of relations among the various parts of the whole. The object's interaction with the observer is essential. We cannot speak about nature without at the same time speaking about ourselves.⁷

Systems theories

Esoteric wisdom is still being handed over to the next generation. Disney's "The Lion King" teaches our children about the circle of life. They learn not to take more than they need. They may perceive how all systems in nature are connected, and are part of a "food-chain", but it will be more difficult to understand the higher connectivity and the role of man in the entire universe.

In Organization Development theory, it is well recognized that organizations can be seen as open systems, interacting with surrounding systems.⁸ The current trend towards flattening organizations, from strictly hierarchical to organic organizations, can be seen as replacing hierarchy with cooperative cycles, in which more people take up the responsibility to lead themselves.

Even in leadership theory, the esoteric wisdom of finding the balance between opposites is recognized. Craig R. Hickman is quite clear when he addresses the tension between "managers" and "leaders": "The real secret to long-term, enduring success lies not in turning the tension into conflict or in trying to make the tension go away, but in accepting the differences in order to tap the power of the tension."⁹

Critical Thinking

Managers and strategic leaders should be able to think critically in a world in which change is accelerating and problems are increasingly complex. Richard Paul recognizes in his book Critical Thinking that governmental, economic, social, and environmental problems are interdependent. The forces to be understood and controlled

will be corporate, national, trans-national, cultural, religious, economic, and environmental, all intricately intertwined.¹⁰ The writer strongly recommends that we start thinking in the long term, beyond short term advantages, and that we broaden our scope even more. Again, this is an attempt to make us aware of our origin, our limitations, the need for cooperation and our responsibility to comply with nature's laws.

Esoteric Wisdom as guidance for a person

Language an obstacle

Notwithstanding the volume of explanations and examples above, the real message still seems to be difficult to comprehend! The main cause of our ignorance is found exactly in what our instrumentality of explication is: our language. Words inevitably reduce the reality as we experience it to general outlines. Our language is a system of abstracts, concepts and symbols, an “intellectual map” of reality. However, this representation of the world has become our reality, and we have forgotten that the map is not the territory!

Language is adapted to practical life only. People can communicate to one another information of a practical character, but as soon as they pass to a slightly more complex sphere they are immediately lost. It takes long training and education (often almost a lifetime) to learn the specific language for a certain specific branch of knowledge, whether it is scientific, religious, military or other.

People should be aware of this limitation called language, installed in them in their very youth, which prevents them from comprehending many clear messages, especially those of esoteric wisdom.¹¹ We have to experience this wisdom in another way.¹² Although few people reach full enlightenment in their devoted lifetimes, almost everybody may have experienced some moments of intuitive insight.

Language influences our thinking, our perception of the world and our total behavior. It makes us divide “our world” (actually the map of our world) into many categories. We need this division to be able to communicate, to measure, and to compare. We talk and think of North and South, Black and White, Good and Bad, Body and Soul, Managers and Leaders. We distinguish nations, political groups, religions, ethnic groups. It’s always us against them. But the polarities we see, or talk about, exist only in our minds: they are conventions we made together in our language.¹³ All distinctions are two opposite ends of a continuum.

Illustrations

On the individual level there are abundant lessons to learn from Taoist and other esoteric theories. They improve the quality of our life and are useful in the education of our children. Perhaps “open doors”, but who is aware of them in daily life?

The first important lesson is: Know yourself. Be aware of your limitations.¹⁴ Recognizing that everyone is a product of his experiences, we will also understand that a morality common to all does not exist.

The second lesson has to do with our goals in life. Contemplating what is important in life, comprehending that all material gains vanish sooner or later, we will find out that we cannot accomplish anything alone. The group needs the leader for guidance and facilitation. The leader needs people to work with, people to serve. The family supports the successful father in his career and the father takes care of the education and well being of the family.

Profoundly understanding the need for companions to allow growth, it will not take much effort to comprehend the next lesson. Try to resolve conflict in a peaceful way and stop making enemies. Resolving conflict often means looking beyond our fears to search for the facts. Taking time to find the truth, or at least to understand our opponent, prevents many conflicts from turning into combat. Our response to conflict determines the shape of our future.

Dealing with conflict requires flexibility. This lesson comes directly from nature. Consider the lives of plants and trees. Whatever is flexible and flowing will tend to grow. Whatever is rigid and blocked will shrivel and die.

Taoist, and many other religious theories promote a frugal lifestyle. Enjoy what you have, instead of grasping for more at the cost of others. A leader should not pass out grades for good performance. That would create a climate of success and failure. Competition and jealousy follow. Emphasizing material success is the same: those who have a lot become greedy, and those who have little become thieves.

Although there are many more lessons, we will end our sequence of illustrations with the lesson of setting an example as a responsible and conscious person. Knowing the restrictions of language and the difficulties of proper communication, the best way to improve the world, is to start with ourselves. As stated before, awareness is the key to change. Our change will affect our immediate surroundings, our children, our family, our church, our neighborhood, and our work. Start with being aware, do not force yourself to be different; trying too hard produces the wrong results.

Esoteric Wisdom as guidance for a Nation.

Esoteric wisdom is not limited to human beings. On the contrary, these universal laws are applicable on each level of reality, as part of a huge system of systems.¹⁵ The same rules apply for the behavior of persons, organizations and states. And on all these levels we should recognize that “our work is our path”: It is not our knowledge, but the example we set, our way of life, that will convince others and ultimately makes the whole system survive and grow.

Dilemma

The restrictions of language that we experience at the individual level, have an analogy at the national level. The cultural differences between nations are incorporated in their languages, and one needs to learn about language, culture, history, religion, science, traditions and lifestyle of a community to be able to really understand the intentions of its members.

Modern communications confront nations with an extra challenge, witnessing events all over the world without understanding the specific local culture. Seeing how people suffer touches us deeply, depending on our own values and norms. Should we let things go or interfere?

do not interfere with “nature”

At the national level, accepting nature’s laws means to accept that every nation or tribe is at a certain stage of “development”, with the values and belief systems that belong

to that stage of development. It seems that this esoteric wisdom of “do not force nature” has been abandoned by the developed countries in the West. They try impatiently to impose their will and values on others, along with unrealistic timelines for implementing change. They are trying to make their concept of democracy or governmental regime work in areas and with countries in which people are used to strong family- and tribal ties, or regional powers. These tribes, however, traditionally submit to the power of the strongest and they are used to continuous change of power in their region.

what happens to them today, can happen to us tomorrow

The Quakers believe that once we recognize an injustice in our world, that knowledge becomes part of us. We can no longer turn away in ignorance. That does not necessarily imply violent interference. Witnessing injustice can take many forms, from participating in demonstrations and writing letters to political activism. Organizations like Greenpeace and Amnesty International show what can be done. It all starts with one personal example. Nonviolent action can neutralize the cycle of violence and social injustice. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote in his letter from Birmingham Jail that “one has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws.”

During the civil rights campaign in America, people learned that segregation was wrong, a contradiction of their very democracy. With marchers and freedom riders dramatizing the injustice, the laws began to change, liberating the souls of many blacks and whites alike from the chains of fear and discrimination. Non-violence even has power

against the ruthlessness of a Hitler. Many Danes, Dutch and even Germans refused to carry out Nazi orders. The use of the media and internet by the opposition in Belgrade is a recent illustration of non-violent resistance to obtain recognition.

the balance / the middle way

Not every soul in nations with inadequate or irresponsible governments can be saved by the West. Neither will it be possible to make all world citizens aware of their capability to take responsibility for their own lives. Natural disasters restore the balance between sources and consumers, and often we can only relieve the victims.

Nevertheless we should do whatever we can to prevent tremendous suffering or total anarchy. We can do so by teaching, educating and setting an example of how to live according to nature's laws: in balance with all other surrounding systems. This should be done in a non-intrusive way, limiting ourselves to handing down the general principles. We should let the local population fill in the details, in accordance with their culture and their level of development and understanding.

Illustrations

Like individuals, sensible nations can learn a lot from nature. To follow the same sequence, the first requirement for any group, nation or organization is: know yourself. Look back at history, and see how consistent the "Western" beliefs and values are. For example, how did the Europeans set about to conquer this continent and establish the United States of America? In search for (religious) freedom, they took away the freedom of the native Americans. The "new Americans" seized their land and "educated" their

children in the Carlisle Indian School, as part of a larger boarding school system. Colonel Francis Pratt is still honored and the U.S. Army proudly preserves the buildings of this school. But the Indian School punished these children for speaking their own language and indoctrinated them to be like the “new Americans”. Like other nations, the USA needed some time to reach the level of understanding to treat all human beings like equals.

After renewing the consciousness of how a nation became what it is, it should ask what its values and interests are today. What are the goals of the nation, and how consistent are they? Does it still want to reform the rest of the world, and why? Does it still impose a personal agenda or value system on others? Is it still judging instead of trying to understand? Also for a nation, being open and attentive is more effective than being judgmental. Does the nation value long-term survival above short term consumption? Does its political system provide a reliable vision for the future? Can it foresee how its interests will change, or will they change with the government in charge, like the ever changing mind of individuals? How consistent is its foreign policy? Today’s friends, tomorrow’s enemies, or enduring coalitions?

With our long-term goals in mind, we should again realize that cooperation forms the very foundation of life as we know it: creating all matter from subatomic energy waves, combining the millions of cells that comprise our bodies, shaping all nature, art, and human society. Many societies, East and West, recall a mythical “golden age” of peaceful cooperation in the past. What keeps us today from seeing this harmony in nature, from recognizing our interdependence? Fear. Whenever we feel our security is

threatened, we become defensive, hostile, and aggressive. This is true for individuals and true for nations. To cooperate we must overcome our fears by building trust, developing a deeper understanding of ourselves and one another!

As on the individual level, nations should resolve conflict in a peaceful manner. For centuries the most common response to conflict has been violence: emotional, physical, interpersonal and international. Many people equate conflict with war and seek peace by designing the “perfect” society, repressing our individuality in an attempt to eliminate conflict from our lives. It is not conflict itself, but how we respond to it that produces violence! Conflicting values, conflicting interests are inevitable, intrinsic to life. The polarities Yin and Yang are everywhere present. Opposition is not something to be feared. On the contrary: facing conflict is how we learn. It is the basis of all thinking, problem solving, creativity and personal development as reality conflicts with our expectations. Old beliefs are always challenged by new discoveries. At a societal level, we call it a paradigm shift. Through conflict we often learn to see more clearly.

Therefore a nation needs the flexibility to accept opposition and to deal with it in a way that enables all parties to survive in an acceptable way. The leading nation does not own people or control their lives. Leadership is not a matter of winning! It takes patience and wisdom, but rendering selfless service, without prejudice, available to all, will bring forth respect for the nation. Like the awareness and change of one individual can be the offset for a better world, the example of a nation will bring trustworthy coalition partners for the future and serve the long-term interests of all. Committed nations can make a difference!

The best way to preserve peace for a nation is a balanced life, with compassion for all creatures; and a sense of frugality, equality and modesty. Egocentric behavior isolates from the common ground of existence. Compassion, sharing, and equality, on the other hand, sustain life. Everything in the universe is connected, we are all one. Also for a nation, efficient use of limited resources is wise. Setting the example is the way to improvement.

With regard to setting an example, there are less positive developments in western society, like increasing individualism, divorces and criminality; the loss of traditional family life; a decreasing quality of education; and over-spending governments. According to John L. Petersen, the U.S. has the highest illiteracy of any industrialized country, as well as the highest divorce rate, highest number of single parents, highest debt per household, highest crime rate, highest homicide rate, and highest per capita expenditures on crime. The U.S. has one of the highest adult mortality rates, the highest infant mortality rate, and yet the highest expenditure per capita for medical bills. It also has the greatest economic disparity between the rich and the poor.¹⁶ The ever improving world-wide communications do not only show the material prosperity of the developed countries, but also their problems and vulnerabilities.¹⁷

These predominantly domestic challenges need to be engaged, if the U.S. wants to retain its leading position in the world. Continuing domestic problems affect the economic and politic reliability of a nation and could well lead to an inescapable negative spiral. Priority for these domestic issues, at the expense of military modernization for instance, is comprehensible. However, improvement could require one or more

generations, since the source of all misery is at the foundation of society: the education and guidance within the family. The U.S. will have to learn that personal freedom must be limited in some way to prevent total anarchy and the loss of all social systems.

Esoteric Wisdom and National Military Strategy

The Tao of War

The current lack of willingness to spend money or lives on the preservation of peace could very well be the center of gravity for U.S. and other Western countries, since this inevitably leads to another conflict. If all elements in nature follow a cyclical pattern, it is quite logical that after a period of peace, inevitably war will follow.¹⁸ Since only the developed countries are in a position to lend a helping hand to other nations, isolationism would not be the right way to implement the traditional law of “do not force nature”.

Esoteric wisdom will -by definition- never become common knowledge and will probably not be able to prevent future wars. In the absence of an apparent immediate threat, many nations are no longer willing to invest in massive military power. To prevent falling into this trap, we should therefore make another conscious investment in a longer period of peace and cooperation. The world-wide reduction of military power might offer an opportunity to improve the world in an alternative, and even better way. The military should have the flexibility to adjust its strategy, its structure, and the deployment of its armed forces to seize this opportunity, instead of preparing for past conflicts. It should, however, preserve its ability to mobilize enough forces to defend vital interests.

Prevention is better than cure

It is in a soldier’s interest to prevent a fight, if possible. Politicians should learn to recognize beginnings. At birth, events are relatively easy to manage. That applies to

plants and to international affairs. Engaged participants in international affairs will not easily be surprised by the acts of other participants and forced to use military power. One should never seek a fight. A person or a nation that initiates an attack is off center and easily thrown.

Engagement, trying to understand the culture and behavior of other nations, can prevent the need for the use of weapons. If other nations do not adhere to “our” rules, we do not have to be the fast moving judge and jury. Showing the consequences of malicious behavior can be more effective than punishment, especially if some of the world’s leading nations combine their efforts. Showing the natural consequences for every act is in the long run more effective than attacking the behavior itself, since it leads to mutual understanding. Punishing others is punishing work and will not convince the antagonist.

A wise leader or leading nation should nevertheless have the flexibility to deal with those who seem not to be listening. The use of force might be necessary to gain time for a coalition effort to convince the opponent to treat others as he would like to be treated. We should be able to convince any nation, in the long run, that it needs the cooperation of all other nations to address organized crime, terrorism and environmental threats, and to secure the economic prosperity of all.

Preventive Defense

The U.S. National Military Strategy embodies many lessons from Esoteric Wisdom, and sets the right priorities: peacetime engagement, conflict prevention, deterrence and ultimately being ready to fight and win. The Secretary of Defense, Mr.

Perry, went even further with his concept of Preventive Defense. Preventive Defense creates the conditions which support peace, making war less likely and deterrence unnecessary.¹⁹

In his address to the Kennedy School in 1996, Mr. Perry calls Preventive Defense the first line of defense, and mentions a number of tools to create the conditions for peace. He emphasizes the programs to counter the proliferation of WMD, like the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program to reduce the nuclear weapon complex of the nations of the former Soviet Union. Mr. Perry also notes that the most coherent institution in many new democracies is the military force. It can help support democracy or subvert it. This important institution should not be ignored, but positively influenced. Teams of American military officers and civilians are helping nations to build modern, professional military establishments under strong civilian defense leadership, like in Hungary and Romania. Confidence-building measures, like developing openness about military budgets, plans, and policies, will help to build trust between countries. The Partnership for Peace program reaches out to all European nations and is the beginning of integrating them into the security architecture of Europe. Mr. Perry affirms that Preventive Defense is a strategy for influencing the world, not compelling it to our will. He also acknowledges that Preventive Defense will not always work, and that strong, ready forces have to be maintained.²⁰

The speech of the Secretary of Defense provided more detailed information on the first line of defense than can be found in the National Military Strategy or the military doctrine. The doctrine for joint operations emphasizes the use of high tech weapon-

systems (air- and seapower) to prevent close combat situations and inevitable casualties.²¹

This doctrine requires investments in high tech weapons and personnel with technical skills, while Preventive Defense requires a larger number of personnel with very different skills.

The Joint Vision 2010 aims for “full spectrum dominance” by developing four operational concepts: dominant maneuver, precision engagement, full dimensional protection and focused logistics.²² The character of this specific military document seems not to allow a more diplomatic approach. It must be clear, however, that the effective application of skilled military foreign area experts, employed both as individuals and in units organized for Preventive Defense / cooperative engagement, can prevent the need for the use of (precision) firepower with its escalating effects. No high tech sensor is able to determine intentions or to bridge cultural gaps. Foreign area experts, however, will understand the views and intentions of the people they live and work with, and will constitute an investment towards the establishment of a long term friendly relationship. Since neither friends nor enemies are forever, these military foreign area experts should be employed in all nations of interest to the U.S..

Mr. Perry’s address should be the basis for the execution, and perhaps the updating, of the National Military Strategy. The basic defense capability, a prerequisite for any independent and sovereign nation, should be balanced with a more holistic approach to global defense. Parts of the capability necessary to deter and fight can also be used to prevent, although it will require adaptations in structure and training of the forces. The combination of diplomacy and military cooperative engagement will result in better

understanding of, and human intelligence on the region involved, reducing mutual fears and improving the likelihood of prolonged cooperation.

Current and projected trends for the future

End of central state-supremacy

One of the trends of our age is the crumbling of centralized structures and the emergence of grassroots democracy, especially in Eastern Europe and Africa, but also in some major “Western” cities. It is probably the best way to overcome cynicism, apathy, and feelings of powerlessness in disillusioned developed countries, and it is the best way to start democracies in developing countries. Personal freedom should, however, be submitted to the authority of law to prevent criminality, tribalism and total anarchy.

A strategy of engagement can assist these countries, but has to be executed by people who are aware of esoteric wisdom. In the long run that will be more effective than deterrence with precision weapons. In coordination with countryteams, this kind of engagement could be performed by small, Special Operations Forces (SOF)-like, military units through the conduct of internal development-type operations.

The role of nations will decline with emerging international cooperation, in the political, economic, and military domain. Robert Reich, Secretary of Labor, offers a plausible perspective in his book The Work of Nations:

We are living through a transformation that will rearrange the politics and economics of the coming century. There will be no national products or technologies, no national corporations, no national industries. There will no longer be national economies, or at least not as we have come to understand that concept. All that remain rooted within national borders are the people who comprise a nation. Each nation’s primary assets will be its citizens’ skills and insights.²³

This means not only that we have to invest in education and training to improve the effectiveness and quality of our workers, it also incites prolonged cooperation with other nations. It is acknowledged that people in most parts of the world still need identification with, and want to belong to a nation, sometimes even driving towards (extreme) nationalism, but that an increasing amount of power is shifting to economical unions, information systems (Internet), multinational business and intergovernmental organizations.

Change in society

Supported by the experimental results in modern physics, the very underpinnings of reality -philosophy, theology, ethics, sociology, and so on- may change in a period that could be labeled as a new Renaissance. Esoteric wisdom is beginning to take hold in Western society, and is embraced by an increasing number of inner-directed people. They are not significantly influenced by the attitudes and actions of others, but look within themselves for direction. This inner-directed segment of the population is growing in all major Western countries, helped by the information technology explosion and leading to a radical new understanding of reality.²⁴

According to John L. Petersen in his book The Road to 2015: Profiles of the Future, a new paradigm will evolve as the inner-directed values increasingly establish a more influential position in society: Because people can directly influence their reality, there will be decreasing tolerance for those who do not take the responsibility of doing so. Those individuals, for instance, who are a burden on society because of poor health or a

form of dependency (drugs, alcohol) may find themselves without the traditional sympathy or support that they previously were accorded. No one can any longer blame "them"; one's problems are not the fault of society or of external circumstances. The law of causes and consequences will become general knowledge, and people will recognize their interdependency.

Change in the characteristics of conflicts

There seems to be a trend which indicates that wars between nations may be replaced by religious and ethnic conflicts. Only seventeen of the hundred wars since 1945 were between nations. The Persian Gulf War, an inter-nation war, resulted in the loss of 20,000 to 30,000 Iraqis, but the struggle for independence in Algeria caused between 200,000 and 300,000 victims. The "Trinitarian War" of Von Clausewitz, in which the government deploys armed forces in a large conflict and the population has to furnish manpower and material, may be a thing of the past.²⁵

The current system of warfare, which generally involves a massive buildup of forces through a few major ports and airfields, is particularly vulnerable to threats like weapons of mass destruction and unconventional warfare. Modern guerillas and terrorists avoid conventional battle and instead attack soft targets, such as rear-area installations or national will. We can expect future enemies to fight us in ways that make the present U.S. military superiority irrelevant.²⁶

Many future conflicts will probably be guerrilla-like, and conventional army units are only partly effective against such a threat. Threats like international terrorism and the

proliferation of weapons of mass destruction cannot be faced by isolating oneself from potential opponents. They call for preventive strategies, for educating others, for negotiating and peaceful conflict resolutions.

Moreover, the future will likely be dictated by cooperating nations in global economic blocks, and perhaps the nations themselves will lose their efficacy. Many threats are already beyond boundaries, like terrorism, international criminality, drug trafficking, global pollution, mass migrations, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The remedy should also be international; worldwide coalitions will be necessary to solve crimes, deal with their causes and relieve the victims. The technological developments, global communications, and information explosion allow a world-wide approach and a shared database if the nations of the world cooperate.

Change in the structure, concepts, and leadership of armed forces

The NDU study “2015: Power and Progress” concludes that the United States might face a hostile great power in the future, but should de-emphasize large military platforms as the basis for force structure, organizing forces and devising operational concepts and plans.²⁷ The study recommends a continuing engagement by increasing information sharing and training with allies and potential coalition partners. If Preventive Defense would not have the desired effect, the local forces in these coalitions would supply more of the firepower and infrastructure, and Americans would provide more of the information, associated systems and stand-off weapons.

Armed forces will find increased employment for small and specialized units in support of other nations or coalitions. Large units like Corps, Divisions, or even Brigades will less often be deployed. Due to the rate of use of certain units, like engineer, service support, intelligence, civil affairs and communications battalions, it might be necessary to adjust the active force structure. A trade-off of less active divisions in favor of more active Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Units could be necessary to meet future requirements. Competing requisitions, like domestic challenges with regard to education, health care, and criminality, urge for conscious governmental choices with regard to the use of the scarce resources, and will probably emphasize the need for a shift in the composition of active forces.

The change in leadership is already taking place. The speeches of the Army chief of staff are available on the World Wide Web, and his "yellow pages" are sent by electronic mail to influence all levels of the organization. All leaders soon will recognize that they are not only the commander who ultimately makes the decisions, but also a team member that should make his team aware of his vision, his philosophy, and the change he is going through with the whole team. The values of the youth of today are different and more individualistic than ever. Leaders will have to teach their team members to participate actively. Only then can the hierarchy change into the organic organization that is flexible enough to confront the volatile, uncertain, challenging, and ambiguous future.

Military leaders on all levels will more often need diplomatic and linguistic skills. They need to be aware of cultural differences and to be able to deal with them. They will have to work closely with civilian government and non-governmental agencies, and will

be subjected to global publicity in all their actions. If military power is to be fully and seamlessly integrated with other elements of national power, political skill is vital for officers at all levels.²⁸

International solutions

No international situation is permanent, and part of the responsibility of leading nations is to accept and sometimes even assist changes, some of which they will not like. Leading nations should try to achieve this in a peaceful way, using all elements of power to improve the situation gradually. They should invest in peace-time relationships and teach developing nations to govern and defend themselves. In the same way, esoteric wisdom should be used to teach warring factions to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Applying force should be limited to resisting changes that threaten the *general* peace. Western countries must be prepared to apply this force, if necessary, but should then act in coalition with other powerful nations to show their *united* strength and determination to preserve world peace. The United Nations, PGO's and PVO's should be used extensively. A recent example of the willingness to contribute to world peace is the participation of 8 smaller countries in a UN Stand-by Forces High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG), with a permanent headquarters in Copenhagen (Denmark).²⁹

Resolving conflict, like on the individual level, means searching for the facts and taking time to find the truth. For individuals, groups, and nations, active listening can build an atmosphere of trust and understanding. The IF-program at USAWC builds

bridges of understanding throughout the world! Consensus takes time: Time to listen, time to explain, time to learn. But it builds enduring bonds.

When the challenges become more complex, no one has the solution in his pocket and strategic leaders have to accept that they are merely facilitators of the process towards a solution, part of the team. Analogously, leading nations face a reality in which only teamwork can bring progress. “New” missions like Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Aid Operations provide the opportunity to build teams all over the world, and share practical experience with other nations.

As a result of the aging of people in the developed countries and the steady rate of birth in developing countries, the center of wealth will shift to foreign markets in the longer term. Consequently, the role of developed countries in these “security-teams” could shift as well, but for the foreseeable future the United States will be a leading team player, providing the technology, the intelligence and the management. Embracing this role, it provides a unique opportunity to experience the paradox that power comes through cooperation, independence through service, and a greater self through selflessness.

Implications and consequences

Using esoteric wisdom in one's life, being aware of what is going on around us, makes our lives richer. It changes us from mere consumers to people who take responsibility for the quality of their lives and of the communities they influence. It might seem to bring less pleasure in the short term, but will result in a more joyful, peaceful, and relaxed existence. Seeing the relationships among all things in reality, and especially our contribution in this huge system of systems, will strengthen us to "sacrifice" a further accumulation of our individual material profits in order to improve the wider community, knowing that this ultimately will contribute to the improvement of our state of affairs. It requires a long term vision, patience, and flexibility to ride the waves of nature. The most important requirement is to let go our greed, arrogance, self-complacency, and fear.

At the national level, priorities will have to be set at gaining economic prosperity without depleting the world's resources, at solving the many domestic challenges, and at promoting world-wide cooperation. Instead of individual achievement and competition, the focus should be on cooperation, family life, group learning, and social skills. That will produce "inner directed" citizens with a long term vision, able to support themselves, their families, and their communities. They will understand the essence of nature and recognize that the common goal is survival of the system as a whole.

It may take several generations to change the culture of the Western society, since it is eagerly trying to alter the East! Nevertheless, a new Renaissance might be near and things might change more rapidly when we will have to accept that we are no longer the

dominant economic force in the world. Military power might be looked upon as a drain on the national treasury, if it cannot be used to preserve peace. Participation in military operations other than war (MOOTW) is therefore predestined.

The military should have the flexibility to adjust its strategy, its structure and the deployment of the armed forces to seize the opportunities of MOOTW. Other skills will be needed, but the war-fighting skills must stay part of the basic training. The higher operational tempo will make less time available for training. Moreover, morale and re-enlistment rates may suffer from the human toll on those separated from their families. On the other hand, offer MOOTW an opportunity to practice in the real world, selflessly contributing to world peace. This must be more motivating than exercising in a simulated or virtual reality.

As defense spending declines further, the U.S. military will increasingly need to rely on coalition partners to perform all their missions, and the other way around. A real investment in peacetime relationships will not allow further reductions in personnel. It is the human factor that will enable a nation to promote its interests.

A need for flattening the command and control structure is likely when smaller units will be deployed independently and automation increasingly supports centralized or decentralized control of the operations.

Without sacrificing the U.S. technological advantage and war-fighting capability, the armed forces should have the flexibility to invest in human intelligence and peace time relationships. The concept of genuine Preventive Defense requires “warrior diplomats”, organized in small and specialized units, to assist diplomatic initiatives. They

will allow the United States to set an example for the world. A more extensive use of small military units, Foreign Area Officers (FAO's), and Special Operations Forces could build long-term relations and serve world peace, where the use of advanced technology and decisive military power only generate temporally short term solutions. The military must, however, still conserve the ability to prepare for massed conflicts, since war will never be exterminated.

Conclusions.

Nations should have a strategic vision, based on esoteric wisdom. Ideally, this vision should guide their behavior. Like individuals, they should be fully and continuously aware of the consequences of their actions, recognizing the natural flow of events between opposites and striving for balance in the long term. Like individuals, they should not focus on short term (material) gains that will be impossible to hold in the long term.

This strategic vision should recognize that the authentic interests are the same for all nations. All would prosper in a clean and peaceful world with mutual trust based on open communications, free trade, and sharing of information to counter all international challenges.

It is the obligation of leadership, as a person or as a Nation, to govern or educate others to live in conscious harmony with natural law. The future of leading nations depends on their behavior with regard to other (developing) countries. Cooperation forms the very foundation of life.

Modern armament and well organized armed forces will always be necessary to deter others who are ignorant of esoteric wisdom. A strategic leader, or leading nation, should however understand that the war-fighting capability must be balanced with a more holistic approach to improve the world. With the end of the Cold War we should move

forward into cooperation, and not fall backward into the old paradigm and postures of defensiveness.

That requires a strategy in which deterrence is balanced with genuine engagement and developmental aid. In such a strategy the armed forces will be used for deterrence *and* peace-keeping in other ways. To invest in peace-time relationships and to promote mutual understanding, measures should be taken to become acquainted with language, culture, history, religion, science, traditions and lifestyle in all nations of interest. The remedies to the changing character of conflicts and the international threats are international cooperation and mutual understanding.

The concept of Preventive Defense, presented by Secretary of Defense Perry, fully complies with this strategic vision, but it is not very apparent in the U.S. National Military Strategy, the military doctrine or the Joint Vision 2010. It is recommended to express Preventive Defense more explicitly in these military documents, and to adapt the structure, concepts, leadership and training of the forces to achieve these insights.

This recommendation for more emphasis on Preventive Defense is not a call for less reliance on technology and war-fighting capabilities than current trends indicate the U.S. is moving towards. It does mean, however, that the anticipated sweeping personnel reduction to be derived from improved technology will not be possible due to the people-intensive nature of Preventive Defense. The human factor is decisive for long-term friendly relations, that can prevent the need to use destructive power.

If Preventive Defense is to be taken seriously, the Embassy Country Teams of the U.S. should positively be the first line of defense for the United States of America. Foreign Area Officers, small military units, or Special Operation Forces, would conduct the “in the weeds” Preventive Defense operations, depending on the local circumstances and in coordination with the Country Team. This more diplomatic role of the military would improve the acquisition of human intelligence, and along with that contribute to a better understanding and an enduring peace.

With this emphasis on “esoteric wisdom” and Preventive Defense / cooperative engagement, the armed forces of the United States would truly be living up to the motto of the United States Army War College: “Not to promote war, but to preserve peace.”

Endnotes

1 Pascal Fontaine, Europe in Ten Points. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, 1995. 27.

2 Chief Seattle's Message to President Pierce, 1854, in Fahey and Armstrong, A Peace Reader, 195.

3 Excerpted from Letter from a Birmingham Jail by Martin Luther King, Jr. Copyright (C) 1963, 1964 by Martin Luther King, Jr.

4 Profound changes of concepts like space, time, matter, object, cause and effect were the result. Newton gave us a mechanical model of the Universe, a three dimensional space, always at rest and unchangeable. Separate of this space was the dimension of time, absolute, running from the past via the present to the future. The elements moving in this absolute space and absolute time, were material points. Newton saw them as small solid and indestructible particles of which everything was made. Their mutual attraction, gravity, caused all motion. This mechanistic view of nature had to do with determinism. Almost everything was predictable according to Newton's laws of motion. Less than a hundred years later we discovered that none of these features had absolute validity.

5 Imagine an orange, blown up to the size of the earth. The atoms of the orange will then have the size of a cherry. Billions of them. An atom is huge in comparison to its nucleus. If an atom would be blown up to the size of the biggest dome in the world, the Saint Peter in Rome, it would show the nucleus as a grain of salt. An atomic nucleus is about 100.000 times smaller than the whole atom. It contains almost all of the atoms mass. So the nucleus must be very condensed mass. A human body with that density would not need more space than a pinhead. All subnuclear particles reach velocities of about 40.000 miles per second within the nucleus. In the vast space between these very dense drops of matter are the electrons running around. Mass has nothing to do with any substance, but is nothing else than a form of energy. It turns out that what we call mass, is in fact a continuous vibrating of very small elements, a nuclear dance. When two particles collide with high energies, they generally break into pieces. But these pieces are not smaller than the original particles. These particles are dynamic patterns, or processes, which involve a certain amount of energy, appearing to us as their mass. After colliding this energy takes a new pattern. From experiments with particle accelerators it became clear that all particles can be transmuted into other particles. They can be created from energy. No particle can however been seen as an independent entity.

6 Buddhists teach that what we call "reality" is in fact an illusion. They explore our universe in a mystical way through meditation to experience unity and still continuous change. They see that everything vibrates in its own frequency. The same kind of understanding is now obtained from modern subnuclear physics.

The understanding of the East and the knowledge of the West lead to the same truth, but our thinking, in our language, is not able to grasp this unity.

7 Niels Bohr: "Isolated material particles are abstractions, their properties being definable and observable only through their interactions with other systems". At the atomic level, objects can only be understood in terms of the interaction between the process of preparation and measurement. The end of this chain of processes lies always in the consciousness of the human observer. Measurements are interactions, which create sensations in our consciousness. For example the visual sensations of a flash of light or the dark spot on a photographic plate. The human observer is necessary to define the properties. Heisenberg: "What we observe is not nature itself, but nature exposed to our method of questioning". The observer decides how he is going to set up the measurement, and this arrangement will determine -to some extent- the properties of the observed object. In atomic physics, the observer influences the object, and is in fact a participant. The famous Hawthorne studies around 1930 led to the same conclusions with regard to human behavior; the investigator changes the object of his research.

8 Wendell L. French and Cecil H. Bell, Jr., Organization Development, Behavioral Science Interventions for Organization Improvement (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995), 89.

9 Craig R. Hickman, Mind of a Manager, Soul of a Leader (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1990), 3.

10 Richard Paul, Critical Thinking: How to Prepare Students for a Rapidly Changing World (Santa Rosa, CA: Foundation for Critical Thinking, 1995), 13.

11 The Bible's story of the Tower of Babel depicts well the restrictions and dangers of language. It causes people to misunderstand each other, and, even worse, it prohibits them to sense reality. Many wise men tried to get this message across, but even they had to use words! Lao Tse teaches in his book Tao Te Ching about his "divine" principle, called Tao: "If you can speak of Tao, it is not Tao." The same applies to the Christian God: you can say what is not God, but there are no words to describe what it is. Another well known quote is: "If you could communicate absolute knowledge by words, everybody would have told his brother or sister."

12 One of the "ways" to enlightenment is for instance the religious way of the monk, who gets a feeling for the universal laws by devoted praying. Another possibility is the way of the fakir, who struggles with his body, or the way of the yogi, who meditates in an attempt to silence his mind and stop the continuous flow of thoughts. The soefi's performed special dances and others may find the truth in astrology, the explanation of dreams or any other way.

13 We think in polarities. We should be aware of the fact that, by focusing on any one concept, we create its opposite. In reality both polarities are just aspects of the same reality. In nature there is no difference between life and death: they are both aspects of a process of regeneration in which there is continuing

change (vibration). An example will make it easier. The cells of our body consist of atoms, electrons and other subatomic particles. The smaller the particle, the shorter its life. Cells die and new ones are born all the time. That keeps us alive: the coat of our stomach replaces itself every seven days. So: what is the death for a cell, is regeneration for the stomach's coat. The process of dying and birth is going on in our body continuously. It's part of the cycle in which everything changes in nature, like the cycle of seasons. Only in our language we call one thing life, and another part of the process we call death. Without this language we might be happier: one of the reasons why Tao Te Ching and Bible frequently speak of "becoming like children". Children are open, flexible, intuitive, natural and not restricted by any language.

14 Knowing yourself starts with realizing that you are not always one and the same, not even for half an hour. They all call themselves the same, but they are completely different. They call themselves 'I', consider themselves master and do not want to recognize another 'I'. Each of them is caliph for an hour, does what he likes regardless of everything, and, later on, the others have to pay for it. And there is no order among them whatsoever. Whoever gets the upper hand is master. He whips everyone on all sides and takes the heed of nothing. But the next moment another seizes the whip and beats him. And so it goes on all one's life. We are a product of our past and our environment. If we see a nice car, or a dress, we will be inclined to spend our money. The moment we receive our pay and the bills, we often regret our impulsiveness. Today we like this, tomorrow we like that or them. It is not easy to change this lack of consistency on a continuous basis, but awareness is the first step to improvement.

15 "As above, so below", is one of the teachings of Buddha and other religious leaders. Starting with smaller particles than we can imagine and ending with macro-universes in time and space that we can not comprehend with our sensors, each element is seen as an universe on its own. All these elements have their own relative place in space (size) and their own relative time of existence (lifecycle), and each element is a link in a larger system, with its respective size and time of existence. Together these elements perform the cosmic dance in a continuous process of regeneration. Every element or subsystem has to be in balance with the lower and higher subsystems, to live according to nature's law. It will simply not survive if it does not contribute to this balance.

16 John L. Petersen, The Road to 2015: Profiles of the Future (Corte Madera, CA: Waite Group Press, 1994), 243.

17 The internet shows for instance the "100 Harshest Fact about our future" on an educational site: <http://www.cs.caltech.edu/%7Eadam/LEAD/harsh.html>. One example out of this hundred: "Every day, the typical 14-year-old watches three hours of TV and does one hour of homework. Every day, over 2,200 kids drop out of school. Every day, 3,610 teenagers are assaulted, 630 are robbed, and 80 are raped. Every day, 500 adolescents begin using illegal drugs and 1,000 begin drinking alcohol. Every day, 1,000 unwed teenage girls become mothers. Every day, over 2,500 American children witness the divorce or separation

of their parents. Every day, 90 kids are taken from their parents' custody and committed to foster homes. Every day, 13 Americans aged 15 to 24 commit suicide, and another 16 are murdered" (Thirteenth Generation)

18 Donald Kagan On the Origins of War and the Preservation of Peace (New York: Doubleday, 1995): War cannot be avoided and is sometimes even justified and preferable to a peace under the old conditions. Like all other cycles in nature, there will always follow war after a period of peace. So, the best thing we can do is actively strive to reduce the danger of war for long stretches of time, and pursue policies that make a satisfactory peace more likely and more lasting.

19 Hon. William J. Perry, Secretary of Defense, Fulfilling the Role of Preventive Defense, an address to the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass on May 13, 1996,

20 Hon. William J. Perry, Secretary of Defense, Fulfilling the Role of Preventive Defense. Speech File Service, Fiscal Year 1997, number 1. 7.

21 U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. Joint Pub 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations, IV-4

22 U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. Joint Vision 2010. 1.

23 Robert Reich, The Work of Nations (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 3.

24 John L Petersen, The Road to 2015; Profiles of the Future (Corte Madera, CA: Waite Group Press, 1994), 234-235.

25 Prof. dr. Martin van Creveld, writer of On Future of War presented this view in The Hague on November 21st 1996.

²⁶ Jon T. Hoffman, "The Future Is Now", Proceedings November 1995: 29.

27 2015: Power and Progress, edited by Patrick M. Cronin, National Defense University Press, Washington, DC. 1996. 153-154.

28 Douglas V. Johnson II and Steven Metz, American Civil-Military Relations: New issues, Enduring Problems (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, 1995), 20.

29 As a next step in the United Nations Stand-by Agreement system (UNSAS), Denmark, Poland, Sweden, Austria, Canada, Norway and the Netherlands offer units and staff officers for Shirbrig, to provide the UN with a multinational military unit that can be employed for chapter Six missions (peacekeeping and humanitarian operations) within 15 - 30 days after warning.

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